



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

GEORGE M. BURGESS
COUNTY MANAGER

December 22, 2003

Honorable Alex Penelas
Mayor

Honorable Chairperson Barbara Carey-Shuler, Ed.D.
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

Dear Mayor Penelas, Chairperson Carey-Shuler, and County Commissioners:

I am pleased to submit to you the FY 2003-04 Business Plan, Adopted Budget and Five-Year Financial Outlook. This document features departmental business plans and highlights budget and program decisions approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on September 17, 2003, at the final budget hearing.

This document is the first that we have published with a formal countywide strategic plan in place. To emphasize the alignment of our operational business plan with the strategic plan, we have refined the content and format of information presented in this document. Important changes include:

- An "Introduction" chapter provides a historical and general perspective of Miami-Dade County government and is presented towards the front of the document.
- The business plan section of the document has been organized by strategic area, consistent with our Countywide Strategic Plan; the first page of each strategic area section includes a table of priority key outcomes and sample performance measures and targets that were incorporated as part of the Strategic Plan by the strategic planning workgroups.
- Similar to previous years, key objectives, as well as illustrative performance indicators, have been highlighted, but this year, they are organized by the outcomes associated with each strategic area.
- To the extent possible, an effort has been made to present information through graphs and charts. We believe that this graphic format makes this document easier and more enjoyable to read and appreciate.
- To make this document more comprehensive, we have incorporated the County's Five-Year Financial Outlook which allows us to have a five-year general outlook as to our ability to provide current level of services within the expected resources available. However, as resources required to implement the County's Strategic Plan are quantified and assessed, the resulting funding requirements will be incorporated into the Five-Year Financial Outlook to evaluate different alternatives that may be available to achieve the established goals and objectives.

Supplementary information contained in the appendices includes detailed budgetary information, and a list detailing the approved FY 2003-04 funding for community-based organizations. A separate "Children's Budget," the first for Miami-Dade County, is being prepared as a companion to this document; publication is expected within the next few weeks.

You may recall from my Proposed Budget message in July, my management philosophy – one that believes that we must be sensitive and responsive to customers, train and develop our workforce, and be focused on innovation and efficiency. My philosophy is consistent with the County's Strategic Plan, which you have supported and approved. The importance of planning for future years cannot be overstated; we must challenge ourselves to think beyond our annual budget plan, keep sight of the multi-year strategic plan desired outcomes, and develop strategies and sound business plans to achieve them. Although this transformation to a results-oriented approach to management, and performance-based decision-making is no small undertaking, it is a journey that we have begun by taking some very important initial steps, and that we will continue as a team.

In addition to our strategic and performance-based management initiatives, the County continues to balance service and property tax levels. Although this budget year has been difficult and challenging, the budget that was finally adopted allows us to continue to provide priority services. At the same time, the millage rates adopted on September 17, 2003, represent a .025 mill reduction from the previous year's total combined operating and debt service millage rates. In fact, the total of the operating and debt service millage rates has decreased each year since FY 1997-98, and this total is the lowest combined property tax rate since FY 1984-85. Additional details on the County's millage rates can be found in the Budget Overview section of this document.

Every department will need to use its resources prudently to stay within the adopted budget. The County's revised quarterly reporting process provides an important tool for departments to track their business objectives and financial condition. You had expressed concern over the budget amendments that were required in FY 2002-03. I share those concerns, and I have discussed them with my management team, including the department directors. I am certain that with prudent management, we can avoid such difficulties in future budget amendments.

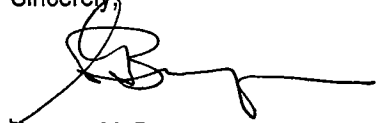
Our projections include benefits to the Countywide General Fund generated as a result of implementing Article V legislation in July 2004. However, we must follow closely any actions regarding the implementing legislation that could negatively affect the financial outlook.

We have, as was done last year, submitted our application to the Government Finance Officers Association for the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. The award is based on the presentation of the budget document as a policy document, communications device, financial plan, and operations guide. Because of the revised time frames of the release of the Proposed Budget, we have not been notified yet as to the status of this year's award.

Honorable Mayor and Members
Board of County Commissioners
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Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you, my staff, the department directors and their staffs, and the Office of Strategic Business Management staff for their time, effort, support, and assistance in preparing the FY 2003-04 Business Plan, Adopted Budget and Five-Year Financial Outlook.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Burgess", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

George M. Burgess
County Manager